

# Pinkston's Block Helps Seal 60-55 Win Over Michigan

[box score](#)

**BROOKLYN, N.Y.** - In the second act of his return home, senior JayVaughn Pinkston stood tall in the final 13 seconds to help No. 12 Villanova rally past No. 19 Michigan 60-55 in the championship game of the Progressive Legends Classic.

Pinkston scored the go-ahead basket on a drive with 13 seconds left and came up with the game's biggest play after Michigan inbounded the basketball trailing 56-55 with 7.8 seconds left. The 6-7 Pinkston soared to block the shot of Zac Irvin's bid for the go-ahead basket and the Wildcats reclaimed possession. Four clutch free throws by Ryan Arcidiacono and a pair of defensive stops later and VU had itself a second consecutive gritty victory over a Top 25 opponent at Barclays Center.

Junior Dylan Ennis scored 15 points and authored a pair of highlight reel blocks of his own. The native of Ontario was named Most Valuable Player of the Progressive Legends Classic for his efforts. Pinkston was named to the all-tournament unit.

This marks Villanova's second consecutive in-season tournament title, coming on the heels of the 2013 Battle 4 Atlantis championship in the Bahamas.

"We're thrilled to win this tournament," stated Wildcats head coach Jay Wright. "I'm really happy for J.P. coming back to Brooklyn, being so unselfish and playing for his team.

"This was a really high level game between two teams at this point in the season. (Michigan) is tough. That's no surprise. We competed against John Beilein teams at West Virginia. They are very well coached and a great defensive team. That's what it was, two tough defensive teams going at it."

The game seesawed back and forth through the first 10 minutes with the Wolverines grabbing a 12-11 edge. Two factors helped VU gain traction in the final seven minutes of the period: the offensive flair of Ennis and team defense.

Villanova clamped down over the final 7:13, holding the Wolverines scoreless in that stretch after a Caris LeVert 3-pointer went down. Michigan was 8-of-27 from the field in the first 20 minutes (.296) as VU continued the hardnosed work that had helped it pull away from No. 14 VCU in the semifinal game of this event on Monday night at Barclays Center.

Villanova led 27-20 at intermission.

As was the case in Monday night's win, a pair of runs marked the start of the second half. This time it was Villanova which reeled off the 6-0 spurt to open the period and it pushed their advantage to 33-20 with 17:43 left on the clock.

But a short jumper from Irvin ignited a 7-0 Wolverines run capped by a 3-pointer by Derrick Walton Jr. to carve the VU lead to 33-27 with 15:51 still to be played in the second half.

Once awakened, the Wolverines kicked their offense into overdrive, sparked by ball movement and accurate shooting from deep. Michigan connected on 11-of-16 of its field goal attempts over the first 12:23 of the second half (.688) while the `Cats offense struggled to regain its groove. The Wolverines regained the lead on a Spike Albrecht triple (39-38) and would extend it to 47-41 with 7:37 left to play.

The lead grew to 51-43 after another Walton jumper with just under six minutes to play in regulation.

But the final burst belonged to Villanova. The `Cats clawed their way back slowly but surely in what would ultimately become a 17-4 spurt to end the contest.

"This was actually my first time in this building," stated Pinkston of his trip here. "It was a fun experience. To win the tournament felt great. Coach always preaches to me about defense. He tells me scoring will come if I focus on defense and rebounding. That's what I did tonight to help my team."

Pinkston conceded that his huge block was a product of a miscalculation.

"I kind of messed up on the play," he said with a smile. "I didn't take away the middle. I just tried to make a play on the ball. I saw that somebody fell and I just went up and made the block."

"We didn't get to address the fact that he did mess up first," added Wright. "His job on that play is to not let any pass go to the middle of the floor. On this one, he got a little overexcited and jumped to the outside. It gave them the pass. But then, to get where he was to block that shot was an incredible play."

The victory pushed Villanova's record to 5-0 and the coaching staff was pleased to head into the Thanksgiving weekend with an unblemished slate.

"I really cannot be happier," stated Wright. "We made a lot of mistakes. We can get a lot better. We still toughed it out and found a way to win. I like where our defense has gotten to at this point in the year."

`Short term, you really get to enjoy Thanksgiving. Two years ago on this night we lost to Columbia by (18) at home. It was a rough Thanksgiving. We're going to concentrate on the next game. We've got a long way to go and I think (the Big East) is going to be a lot tougher."

The Wildcats will spend a few days with their families before resuming practice ahead of Sunday's late afternoon matinee against Delaware at the Wells Fargo Center. Tipoff is slated for 4:30 p.m. and the game will air nationally on Fox Sports 1.